

Confidentiality Animation Transcript

Animation: Two cartoon men are on screen standing in front of a mountain range. One man is green and the other is red.

Animation: The red man shrugs his shoulders and a question mark appears above his head.

Red man: What does confidentiality mean?

Green man: Confidentiality refers to the obligation of organisations that collect information to keep the information they collect secret.

Red man: Could you explain this a bit more?

Animation: Background fades away and is replaced with a cartoon of a woman holding shopping bags, and a cartoon man wearing a hard hat standing in front of a factory.

Green man: Statistics are produced from information that has been provided about individual people or organisations. Those who provide this information may not want others to know these details.

Animation: Background fades back to the original of the men standing with mountains in the background.

Red man: Do you mean someone's income, how old they are, or if they have been a victim of a crime?

Green man: Yes, these as well as many other types of information which may be personal, or commercially sensitive.

Red man: Commercially sensitive?

Animation: The red man scratches his head.

Green man: This could include a business' profit or loss, how much they pay their employees, how much they spend on research and development. Therefore organisations that collect and release data need to protect the secrecy of the information. This is done by ensuring that no person or organisation is likely to be identified in the data that are released.

Red man: Why is confidentiality important?

Green man: Let's use an example of what could happen if data are released in a way that allows an individual to be identified.

Animation: Background changes to an image of two buildings. A green one labelled "Jones Corp" and an orange one labelled "Smith Corp". "Smalltown" is written on a sign in the foreground.

Green man: Jones Corporation and Smith Corporation are the only two supermarkets in town.

Green man: If retail data for supermarkets were made available for Smalltown, the owners of both businesses could easily find out information about the other by subtracting their own data from the published data.

Animation: image is overlaid with unmarked column and line graphs and a pie chart.

Animation: The background returns to the 2 men standing in front of the mountain.

Green man: The balance equals the competitor's data.

Red man: So they could identify what were the profits, expenses, wages per employee, rental costs, and many other items for their competitor.

Animation: Red man shrugs.

Green man: Yes, that is correct. It might be possible for the data to be used to their commercial-advantage.

Red man: I understand what can happen, however why would this be a concern for the organisation that collects the information?

Why is confidentiality important to them?

Green man: The first reason is that there are legal obligations to protect the secrecy of the data given to them, and these obligations must be met. Another important reason is the need to maintain the trust of data providers. If information about yourself was provided to an organisation that collects information on the understanding that they have to keep it secret, and other people get access to that personal information, how would you feel?

Red man: I would be very annoyed. I would not trust them, and I certainly would not be prepared to provide any more information in future.

Green man: Maintaining this trust helps achieve a higher response to data collections and results in better quality data.

Red man: So how do organisations that collect information maintain confidentiality?

Green man: Organisations that collect data apply a range of techniques that avoid the disclosure of confidential information.

Green man: For more information about disclosure avoidance techniques, I would recommend that you go to the www.nss.gov.au website as good place to start looking.

Red man: I see that we all benefit from ensuring confidentiality. Thank you.

Animation: end.

